

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2012 Support of the Five Star Restoration Training Grant

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Catalog of Domestic Assistance Number: 66.462

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-12-02

Dates: Proposals must be received in hard copy by the Agency Contact (See Section IV of this RFP) by **5:30 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) July 16, 2012** or by electronic submission through Grants.gov by **11:59 P.M. EDT July 16, 2012**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **July 6, 2012**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands.

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from the eligible entity whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The entity will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

Note to Applicants: If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your proposal to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section II.C CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS.

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to manage the Five Star Restoration Training Grant. Specifically, EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to: 1) prepare and advertise a Request for Proposals (RFP), establish review criteria for evaluating and selecting subawardee proposals, and make subawards to support environmental training through voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects that provide ecological and socioeconomic benefits to the surrounding communities and their citizens; 2) oversee and monitor subawardees for successful completion of the restoration training projects; 3) provide technical support to subawardees through peer-to-peer outreach to broaden participation in restoration training projects; 4) qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the restoration training projects accomplished through the subawards; and 5) develop a strategy to promote and grow the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program over the life of the cooperative agreement. The competitive subaward process proposed by the applicant must be on a national scale by allowing for subaward proposals for restoration training projects from across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories. For the purpose of this announcement, wetlands include, but are not limited to, areas with any one of the following characteristics: appropriate hydrology, hydric soils or hydrophilic plants including marine systems, the continental shelf and mudflats; estuarine fresh, brackish, and saltwater systems; stream or river-corridors; lake associated systems; and palustrine systems (see Cowardin et al., at <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/wetlands/classwet/index.htm>). Funding provided under this announcement supports the following goal of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 – 2015 EPA Strategic Plan: Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore

Watershed and Aquatic Ecosystems. Information on the FY 2011 – 2015 EPA Strategic Plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>.

Eligible applicants under this announcement are non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs on a national basis.¹ Non-profit private universities and colleges and non-profit institutions of higher education are considered non-profit organizations and are eligible under this announcement. **Individual states, tribes, local governments, and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply under this announcement.** Non-profit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply under this announcement.

The total federal amount of funding expected to be available under this announcement is approximately \$1,000,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share /match requirement). It is anticipated that one cooperative agreement will be incrementally funded under this announcement with a four-year project period. Subawards awarded under the cooperative agreement are anticipated to have project periods ranging from one to two years. Funding for each subaward in the past has ranged from \$5,000 to \$40,000, with \$20,000 as the average amount awarded per project. Note: Applicants can identify a slightly different range and average amount for each subaward as part of their proposal narrative. The subawards funded under the cooperative agreement must be completed prior to the end of the cooperative agreement project period. The subawards need to be completed in sufficient time for the recipient to, for example, aggregate results and ensure that subawardees have been reimbursed for all incurred costs.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. FIVE STAR RESTORATION TRAINING GRANT OBJECTIVES

The Five Star Restoration Training Grant was initiated in FY 1999 to provide subawards to eligible subawardees to bring together citizen groups, corporations, youth conservation corps, students, landowners, and government agencies to undertake projects that achieve environmental training through voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects. For the purpose of this announcement, wetlands include, but are not limited to, areas with any one of the following characteristics: appropriate hydrology, hydric soils or hydrophilic plants including marine systems, the continental shelf and mudflats; estuarine fresh, brackish, and saltwater systems; stream or river-corridors; lake associated systems; and palustrine systems (see Cowardin et al., at <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/wetlands/classwet/index.htm>). A brief description of all the restoration training projects funded under previous Five Star Restoration Training Grants since FY 1999 and other additional information can be found on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star/.

¹ In accordance with the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act at 31 USC Sec. 6101, the term "nonprofit organization" means "any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that - (A) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (B) is not organized primarily for profit; and (C) uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization."

In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their ability, and describe an approach, for serving as an intermediary organization to manage the Five Star Restoration Training Grant. Specifically, as part of their project approach in the proposal narrative, applicants should demonstrate their ability to, for example:

- 1) Prepare and advertise an RFP, establish criteria for evaluating and selecting subawardee proposals, and make subawards to support environmental training through voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects;
- 2) Oversee and monitor subawardees for successful completion of restoration training projects;
- 3) Provide technical support to subawardees through peer-to-peer outreach to broaden participation in restoration training projects;
- 4) Qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the restoration training projects accomplished through the subawards; and
- 5) Develop a strategy to promote and grow the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program over the life of the cooperative agreement.

The competitive subaward process proposed in the project approach must be on a national scale by allowing for subawardee proposals for restoration training projects across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories (i.e., Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa). At a minimum, the projects funded as subawards should have the following components: 1) include an environmental training component; 2) include a variety of partners; 3) incorporate ecological and socioeconomic benefits; 4) be part of a watershed or community-based plan; and 5) demonstrate on-the ground, voluntary restoration for wetlands. Applicants may include any other subaward activities in the RFP for the subawards that they believe will help promote and attain the objectives and goals described in the announcement.

Eligible entities for the competitive subaward program include public and private nonprofit institutions/ organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, states, local governments, U.S. territories, interstate agencies, and individuals. For the purposes of this announcement, EPA has determined that the following types of entities are *ineligible* for the competitive subaward program: for-profit entities and all federal agencies. EPA award officials will disapprove the costs of proposed subaward work to 501(c)(4) organizations identified in an application, or workplan changes requiring prior approval, if the work involves lobbying activities or would otherwise violate the principles of EPA's subaward policy.

Effective partnerships are very important to the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program. In their proposals, applicants should identify appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program. Applicants should also include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. If the applicant chooses to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants) please refer to Section II.C, CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS, before doing so as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless the applicant selects them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Partnerships between organizations focused on wetland and ecological restoration, education, training, and socioeconomic concerns can greatly benefit from one another's experience.

B. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of assistance agreements to the following activities: conducting or promoting the coordination

and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. For the purposes of this announcement, proposals must be limited to activities that conduct or promote the coordination and acceleration of training relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement. The recipient of the cooperative agreement will issue subawards under the Five Star Restoration Training Grant with the training authority contained in section 104(b)(3) of the CWA and applicable federal grant regulations.

Funds received through this competition cannot be used for the purchase of land or conservation easements. Proposal tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit (e.g., CWA Section 404 permit, CWA Section 402 permit, CWA Section 401 certification) or federal, state, tribal, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are not eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed only for the purposes of treating wastewater or stormwater. Funds cannot be used to fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property. Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes, etc.) and office furniture are not eligible for funding under this program. The lease of vehicles may be eligible for funding, but is contingent on justification of need in the proposal narrative. Proposed projects must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

C. EPA'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The Five Star Restoration Training Grant supports EPA's FY 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters; Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>.

Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters -- Protect and restore our waters to ensure drinking water is safe, and that aquatic ecosystems sustain fish, plants, and wildlife, and economic, recreational, and subsistence activities.

- Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems -- Protect the quality of rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands on a watershed basis, and protect urban, coastal, and ocean waters.

All proposed projects must demonstrate a linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring watersheds and protecting aquatic ecosystems.

Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- The number of community/watershed-based wetland restoration training projects funded through subawards.
- Development of outreach materials and tools to help local governments or community-based groups incorporate their restoration training project into the larger community activities.
- The number of individuals trained.
- Development and verification of subawardee tracking (reporting) systems.

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated environmental outcomes from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Number of acres or miles of created, re-established, rehabilitated, or enhanced wetlands.
- Increased community capacity for environmental stewardship.
- Change in knowledge about community/watershed-based wetland restoration.
- Change in behavior for those involved in each community/watershed-based wetland restoration training project.

As part of the proposal narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA's discussion of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement under this announcement with a total federal funding level of approximately \$1,000,000. The cooperative agreement is anticipated to be incrementally funded at approximately \$250,000 for each year of the project with a maximum federal award amount of \$1,000,000 over a four-year project period, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. The successful applicant should provide EPA with a negotiated, four-year work plan covering four distinct one-year periods of performance. Subawards awarded under the cooperative agreement are anticipated to have project periods ranging from one to two years. The subawards need to be completed in sufficient time for the recipient to, for example, aggregate results and ensure that subawardees have been reimbursed for all incurred costs. Funding for each subaward in the past has ranged from \$5,000 to \$40,000, with \$20,000 as the average amount awarded per project. Note: Applicants can identify a slightly different range and average amount for each subaward as part of their proposal narrative.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund the proposal by funding discrete portions or phases of the proposed project. If EPA decides to partially fund the proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the

proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

It is anticipated that a cooperative agreement will be funded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for the project selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
3. In accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g) and 40 CFR 30.43(e), review of proposed procurements;
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient);
5. Review and comment on content of tasks/deliverables and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision of the content of reports rests with the recipient);
6. Review of evaluation criteria in selecting subawardees (the final decision on the evaluation criteria rests with the recipient);
7. EPA staff will review the subaward RFP and may provide comments to ensure consistency with the applicant's scope of work (the recipient is responsible for the content of, and all final decisions regarding, the subaward RFP including the disposition of any EPA comments on the subaward RFP);
8. EPA staff participation in the review process for selection of subawardees (the majority of the selection panel members must be non-federal members);
9. EPA review and approval of the substantive terms of subawards to verify compliance with federal requirements (the final decision on the selection of subawardees rests with the recipient); and
10. Upon request by the recipient and subject to the availability of personnel, EPA will provide the recipient with access to EPA scientific expertise, sampling protocols, publicly available data, and other forms of technical assistance.

C. CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS

1. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Part 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the

procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

2. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Part 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants under this announcement are non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs on a national basis.² Non-profit private universities and colleges and non-profit institutions of higher education are considered non-profit organizations and are eligible under this announcement. **Individual states, tribes, local governments, and for-profit organizations are not eligible under this announcement.** Non-profit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply under this announcement. EPA may ask applicants to demonstrate that they are eligible for funding under this announcement including demonstrating that they are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs on a national basis.

The term “interstate agency” is defined in CWA section 502 as “an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator.” An intertribal consortium is a partnership between two or more tribes that is authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance (see 40 CFR 35.502.). The intertribal consortium is eligible only if the consortium demonstrates that all of its members meet the eligibility requirements and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance in accordance with 40 CFR 35.504 at the time of proposal submission. An intertribal consortium must submit with its proposal to EPA adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the consortium by its members to apply for and receive the grant (see 40 CFR 35.504.). Nonprofit organizations may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a nonprofit organization in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Circular 2 CFR Part 230 (non-profit organizations). Copies of OMB circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. Interstate agencies may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority, which establishes their status.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will contribute a minimum non-federal cost share/match of 25 percent of the total project cost (***which equals the requested total federal share and match***) in accordance with **40 CFR 35.385 and 40 CFR 35.615**. This means that EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost. Cost shares/matches can be in the form of cash or can come from in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, *etc.*, subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 40 CFR 31.24 or 40 CFR 30.23, as applicable. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. The cost share/match must be for allowable project costs. Cost share/matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the work plan. All grant funds are subject to

² In accordance with the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act at 31 USC Sec. 6101, the term “nonprofit organization” means “any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that - (A) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (B) is not organized primarily for profit; and (C) uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.”

federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of restrictions are outlined in Sections I.B, III.D, and III.E of this announcement) also apply to the use of cost share/matching funds. Other federal grants may not be used as cost shares/matches without specific statutory authority. Applicants that do not demonstrate how they will meet the minimum cost share/match requirement in their proposal submission will not be considered for funding.

The minimum match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four. EPA will use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{4} = \text{minimum cost share/match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$1,333,333 the applicant must be able to provide \$333,334 in cost share/match and the total federal portion would be \$1,000,000.

OR

$$\frac{\text{Total Federal Funds Requested (\$)}}{3} = \text{minimum cost share/match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total federal funds requested** are \$1,000,000 the applicant must be able to provide \$333,333 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements which if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement.
2. An applicant must demonstrate that it can meet the cost share/match requirements in Section III.B of this announcement at the time of proposal submission.
3. Proposals must address how the applicant will establish and manage a competitive subaward program on a national scale by allowing for subaward proposals for restoration training projects from across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories.
4. Proposals must be limited to activities that conduct or promote the coordination and acceleration of training relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Other activities under CWA section 104(b)(3) will not be considered for funding. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.
5. Proposals must **substantially comply** with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.C.3 with respect to the proposal narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.C.3 establishes a 12-page, single-spaced proposal narrative page limit that includes the cover page.
6. Proposals must be received by EPA or received through Grants.gov, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. If submitting a hard copy proposal,

- applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person / office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.
7. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems solely attributable to the Grants.gov website and not the applicant. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person / office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Myra Price at price.myra@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline -- failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
 8. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. **Proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions or e-mailed submissions.**
 9. Proposals must be consistent with the funding restrictions set forth in Section III.D.
 10. If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible activities set forth in Section III.E, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

D. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable OMB Cost Circulars: 2 CFR Part 225 (states and local governments), 2 CFR Part 230 (non-profit organizations), or 2 CFR Part 220 (universities). Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree to comply with the applicable Circular's restriction on using assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts). Funds cannot be used to pay for travel by federal agency staff. Proposed project activities must also comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance. For the purposes of this announcement, EPA has determined that the following types of entities are *ineligible* for the competitive subaward program: for-profit entities and all federal agencies. EPA award officials will disapprove the costs of proposed subaward work to 501(c)(4) organizations identified in an application, or workplan changes requiring prior approval, if the work involves lobbying activities or would otherwise violate the principles of EPA's subaward policy.

E. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Funds cannot be used to fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property.
- Funds cannot be used for the purchase of land or conservation easements.
- Proposal tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit (e.g., CWA Section 404 permit, CWA Section 402 permit, CWA Section 401 certification) or federal, state, tribal, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are **not** eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks.
- Funds cannot be used for implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs.
- Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed for the purposes of only treating wastewater or stormwater.
- Purchase of any type of equipment including vehicles, boats, motor homes office furniture valued at \$5,000 or more is not eligible for funding.

- Lease of a vehicle(s) may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the proposal narrative.
- Projects must be performed entirely within the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories (i.e., Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa).

IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. HOW TO OBTAIN A PROPOSAL PACKAGE

Applicants can download individual grant application forms, including Standard Forms (SF) 424 and SF 424A, from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>. If you cannot access the electronic forms, a paper application kit will be mailed upon request. Please send an e-mail to GAD_OGDWEB@epamail.epa.gov with 'PAPER APPLICATION KIT' in the subject line to request a paper application kit.

B. FORM OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option to submit their proposal packages (as described in Section IV.C below) in **one** of two ways: 1) electronically via www.grants.gov or 2) hard copy with compact disc (CD) to the Agency Contact identified in Section IV.B.2 via express delivery service, hand delivery, or courier service. Proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed or e-mailed submissions. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C, CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, below, regardless of mode of submission.

1. Grants.gov Submission

The electronic submission of your proposal must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. **Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.**

To begin the proposal process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package" to download the compatible Adobe viewer and obtain the application package. To apply through grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader applications and download the compatible Adobe Reader version (Adobe Reader applications are available to download for free on the Grants.gov website. For more information on Adobe Reader please visit the Help section on grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp).

Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OW-OWOW-12-02**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.462), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the proposal package by clicking on the Application button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Find Grant

Opportunities” button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Proposal Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **11:59 P.M. EDT July 16, 2012**.

Please submit **all** of the proposal materials described below.

Proposal Materials

The following forms and documents are required and must be submitted under this announcement:

- I. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- II. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- III. Proposal Narrative - prepared as described in Section IV.C.3 of the announcement.

The proposal package *must* include all of the following materials:

I. Standard Form -424 (SF-424), Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF-424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

II. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs:

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. In Section B: Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for non-federal cost share/match, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (combined federal funds and non-federal cost share/match).

III. Proposal Narrative

Prepare the proposal narrative in accordance with the instructions in Section IV.C.3, Proposal Narrative, of the announcement. The proposal narrative should be readable in PDF or MS Word and consolidated into a single file.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

Documents I through III listed under Proposal Materials above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For documents I and II, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action will move the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For document III, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your proposal narrative as described in Section IV.C.3 of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word, PDF or WordPerfect file. When you are ready to attach your proposal to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach your proposal (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click “Add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary. Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY12 – **Five Star Grant Program** – 1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – FY12 – **Five Star Grant Program** – Back-up Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – FY12 – **Five Star Grant Program** – 2nd Submission.”

Once your proposal package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the proposal package through Grants.gov.

In the “Application Filing Name” box, your AOR should enter your organization’s name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY12), and the grant category (e.g., Five Star Grant Program). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the proposal package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or e-mail at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or contact **Myra Price at 1-202-566-1225 or price.myra@epa.gov**.

Proposal packages submitted thru grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the proposal deadline, please contact **Myra Price as indicated above**. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

2. Submission by Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD)

Two hard copies of the complete proposal package, as described in Section IV.C CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION below, and an electronic version on a CD, are required to be sent by express delivery service, courier service, or hand delivery. **Proposals submitted by U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed or e-mailed submissions.** Please mark all submissions: **ATTN: FY12 Five Star Grant Program Proposal**. Electronic files on the CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc). Letters of support from potential partners and annotated resumes will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD.

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be received by the Agency
Contact identified below by **5:30 P.M. EDT July 16, 2012**.

The address for hard copy submission is:

Attn: Myra Price
US EPA, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds
EPA West Building, Room 7231P
1301 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

C. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely. A complete proposal package must include the following three documents described below:

1. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at

no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

2. Standard Form (SF) 424A – Budget Information

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. In Section B: Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for non-federal cost share/match, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (combined federal funds and non-federal cost share/match).

3. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative, Sections A-E below, must be limited to no more than twelve (12) typewritten single-spaced 8.5 x 11 inch pages (a page is one side of paper) (**except** for documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. Additional pages beyond the 12 page limit will not be considered. Supporting materials (such as letters of support from potential partners and annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit for the proposal narrative. Any documentation pertaining to Quality Assurance/Quality Control and Invasive Species Control is also not included in the page limit for the proposal narrative.

The proposal narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below in items A-E. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal narrative.

A. Cover Page including:

- a. Project title;
- b. Name of applicant;
- c. List of all potential partners associated with the project;
- d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
- e. Total project cost, (specify the amount of federal funds requested, the non-federal cost share/match, and the total project cost); and
- f. Abstract/project summary (recommended 75 words or less): Provide a brief description of the proposed project.

B. Project description containing:

- a. Project Goals and Objectives (describe a plan for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes which would include the following elements):
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan – Provide the objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems (see Section I.C);
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) – Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project, and an approach for tracking and reporting your progress

- toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C); and
- iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of this project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of project commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C).
- b. **Project Approach:** Describe your approach for serving as an intermediary organization to manage the Five Star Restoration Training Grant (see Section I.A). The competitive subaward process proposed in the project approach must be on a national scale by allowing for subawardee proposals for restoration training projects across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories. The project approach should demonstrate the applicant's ability to:
 - i. prepare and advertise an RFP, establish criteria for evaluating and selecting subawardee proposals, and make subawards to support environmental training through voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects that: 1) include an environmental training component; 2) include a variety of partners; 3) incorporate ecological and socioeconomic benefits; 4) be part of a watershed or community-based plan; and 5) demonstrate on-the ground, voluntary restoration for wetlands;
 - ii. oversee and monitor subawardees for successful completion of restoration training projects;
 - iii. provide technical support to subawardees through peer-to-peer outreach to broaden participation in restoration training projects;
 - iv. qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the restoration training projects accomplished through the subawards; and
 - v. develop a strategy to promote and grow the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program over the life of the cooperative agreement.
 - c. **Milestone Schedule:** Provide a milestone schedule that covers each year of the total grant period request (up to four years for the cooperative agreement and one to two years for the subawards) and provides a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks. The milestone schedule should show timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks including, but not limited to, major annual outreach activities, release of the subaward RFP, and the approximate time of award of the subawards. The project start date will follow acceptance of the award by the successful applicant.
 - d. **Partnerships:** Describe the agencies/organizations who you will partner with as appropriate and necessary to successfully conduct the project. Include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. Describe how these partnerships will contribute to the success of the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program. If you choose to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including

consultants) please refer to Section II.C, CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS, before doing so as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless you select them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Letters of support from potential partners are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the proposal narrative.

- e. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) (not counted in page limit): If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A, QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC), of this announcement for additional information).
- f. Invasive Species Control (not counted in page limit): If applicable, describe how you will ensure that your project does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. Explain how you would respond if an invasive species problem occurs in relation to your project. (See Section VIII.E, INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL, of this announcement for additional information).

C. Programmatic Capability -

- a. Organizational Experience. Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
- b. Staff expertise/qualifications. Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). Annotated resumes of applicant's key staff are also encouraged and are not included in the page limit.

D. Detailed Budget Narrative - Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A such as "other" and "contractual". All subaward funding should be located under the "other" cost category.

- a. Total costs must include both federal and cost share/match (non-federal) components. For each cost category, indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by EPA and what portion of the cost will be covered by the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match as required in Section III.B. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend meetings throughout the proposed project period to promote the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program or to increase subawardee applications. Describe each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of costs.
- b. When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to

improve or expand the project funded under the agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the project.

E. Past Performance – Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and:

- a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
- b. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
- c. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

Note: In evaluating applicant's past performance, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in the proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see also Section V).

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its proposal narrative any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section IV.B.2 by **5:30 P.M. EDT July 16, 2012**. Proposals submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be submitted by **11:59 P.M. EDT July 16, 2012**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant (except for Tribes and Tribal Consortia) should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

F. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

EPA recommends that you do not include confidential business information ("CBI") in your proposal. However, if CBI is included, it will be treated in accordance with 40 CFR 2.203.

Applicants must clearly indicate which portion(s) of their proposal they are claiming as CBI. EPA will evaluate such claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure. The Agency protects competitive proposals from disclosure under applicable provisions of the Freedom of Information Act prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the following evaluation criteria and weights (100 total point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal.

<p>1) Project Goals and Objectives (15 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on each of the following sub-criterion:</p> <p>A. The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA’s Strategic Plan.(examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (10 points)</p> <p>B. The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (5 points)</p>
<p>2) Project Approach (35 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the project approach demonstrates the applicant’s ability to:</p> <p>A. Prepare and advertise a Request For Proposals, establish criteria for evaluating and selecting subawardee proposals, and make subawards to support environmental training through voluntary, community/watershed-based wetland restoration projects that: 1) include an environmental training component; 2) include a variety of partners; 3) incorporate ecological and socioeconomic benefits; 4) be part of a watershed or community-based plan; and 5) demonstrate on-the ground, voluntary restoration for wetlands. (15 points)</p> <p>B. Oversee and monitor subawardees for completion of restoration training projects. (5 points)</p> <p>C. Provide technical support to subawardees through peer-to-peer outreach to broaden participation in restoration training projects. (5 points)</p> <p>D. Qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the restoration training projects accomplished through the subawards. (5 points)</p>

	E. Develop a strategy to promote and grow the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program over the life of the cooperative agreement. (5 Points)
3) Specific Workplan Proposal Narrative Elements (15 points)	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates each of the following sub-criterion:</p> <p>A. A clearly articulated milestone schedule for project tasks including, but not limited to, major annual outreach activities, release of the subaward RFP, and the approximate time of award of the subawards. (5 points)</p> <p>B. The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. Total costs must include both federal and cost share/match (non-federal) components. Describe the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs (both federal and non-federal components). (10 points)</p>
4) Project Partnerships (10 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project including whether they have provided a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks, and how these partnerships will contribute to the success of the Five Star Restoration Training Grant program. (10 points)
5) Programmatic Capability (Organizational Experience/ Staff Expertise/ Qualifications) (15 Points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:</p> <p>A. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their infrastructure as it relates to the ability to successfully implement the project. (10 points)</p> <p>B. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (5 points)</p>
6) Past Performance (10 points)	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <p>A. Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). (3 points)</p> <p>B. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded</p>

	<p>and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (3 points)</p> <p>C. Extent and quality to which they documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g. outcomes and outputs) under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed in the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented why not. (4 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under A., B., and C. above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and/or prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history must indicate that in the proposal and they will receive a neutral score for the factor (i.e., 1.5 points for subcriterion A., 1.5 points for subcriterion B., and 2 points for subcriterion C.).</p> <p>Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factor (i.e., 0 points for subcriterion A., 0 points for subcriterion B., and 0 points for subcriterion C.).</p>
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B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by EPA in hard copy or received via Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel comprised of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. The panel will develop a ranking list of the proposals based on the evaluation scores received. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account programmatic priorities.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Following EPA's evaluations of the proposals, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. A final application will be requested from the eligible applicant whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The applicant will be provided with instructions and a due date for

submittal of the final application package. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance, nor is it a guarantee that the award will be made.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy, including EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1). An approvable final workplan is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component;
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

In addition, the successful applicant and their partners will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

The selected project will be posted on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands. This website may also contain additional information about this RFP. Deadline extensions, if any, will be posted on this website and www.grants.gov.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations"); 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments"); and 40 CFR Part 45 (Training Assistance). A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in the cooperative agreement will be included in the final assistance agreement.

C. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted semi-annually and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the workplan consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, and 40 CFR Part 45. Award recipients will be required to submit the final report electronically and in hard copy and should include, in addition, a 1-2 page project summary.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPABILITY REQUIREMENT

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and

submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

E. SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION REPORTING

Applicants must ensure that they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the subaward and executive total compensation reporting requirements established under OMB guidance at [2 CFR Part 170](#), unless they qualify for an exception from the requirements, should they be selected for funding.

F. CENTRAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION (CCR)/SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM) AND DATA UNIVERSAL NUMBERING SYSTEM (DUNS) REQUIREMENTS

Unless exempt from these requirements under OMB guidance at [2 CFR Part 25](#) (e.g., individuals), applicants must:

1. Be registered in the CCR prior to submitting an application or proposal under this announcement. CCR information can be found at <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/>
2. Maintain an active CCR registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or proposal under consideration by an agency, and
3. Provide its DUNS number in each application or proposal it submits to the agency. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.

If an applicant fails to comply with these requirements, it will, should it be selected for award, affect their ability to receive the award.

Please note that the CCR will be replaced by the System for Award Management (SAM). SAM is expected to be live and active by May 29, 2012. (If you go to CCR.gov on May 29 you will be re-directed to <https://www.sam.gov/sam/>.) To learn more about the switch from CCR to SAM, please go to <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/NewsDetail.aspx?id=2012&type=N>. To learn more about SAM, you can go to <https://www.sam.gov/sam/>.

G. UNLIQUIDATED OBLIGATIONS

An applicant that receives an award under this announcement is expected to manage assistance agreement funds efficiently and effectively and make sufficient progress towards completing the project activities described in the work-plan in a timely manner. The assistance agreement will include terms/conditions implementing this requirement.

H. COPYRIGHTS

In accordance with 40 CFR 30.36 for institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations, or 40 CFR 31.34 for other recipients, EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes copyrighted works developed under a grant, subaward or contract under a grant or subaward. Examples of Federal purpose include but are not limited to: (1) Use by EPA and other Federal employees for official Government purposes; (2) Use by Federal contractors performing specific tasks for the Government; (3) Publication in EPA documents provided the document does not disclose trade secrets (e.g. software codes) and the work is properly attributed to the recipient through citation or otherwise; (4) Reproduction of documents for inclusion in Federal depositories; (5) Use by State, tribal and local governments

that carry out delegated Federal environmental programs as “co-regulators” or act as official partners with EPA to carry out a national environmental program within their jurisdiction; (6) Limited use by other grantees to carry out Federal grants provided the use is consistent with the terms of EPA’s authorization to the grantee to use the copyrighted material.

I. DISPUTE PROCEDURES Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies may also be requested by contacting the Agency contact in Section VII.

J. UNPAID FEDERAL TAX LIABILITIES AND FELONY CONVICTIONS FOR NON-PROFIT AND FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Awards made under this announcement are subject to the provisions contained in the Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 HR 2055, Division E, Sections 433 and 434 regarding unpaid federal tax liabilities and federal felony convictions. These provisions prohibit EPA from awarding funds made available by the Act to any for-profit or non-profit organization: (1) subject to any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability; or (2) that was convicted (or had an officer or agent of such corporation acting on its behalf convicted) of a felony criminal conviction under any Federal law within 24 months preceding the award, **unless** EPA has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation, or such officer or agent, based on these tax liabilities or convictions, and determined that such action is not necessary to protect the Government’s interests. Non-profit or for-profit organizations that are covered by these prohibitions are ineligible to receive an award under this announcement.

K. UNFAIR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

EPA personnel will take appropriate actions in situations where it is determined that an applicant may have an unfair competitive advantage, or the appearance of such, in competing for awards under this announcement. Affected applicants will be provided an opportunity to respond before any final action is taken.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

In accordance with EPA’s Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **July 6, 2012** and written responses will be posted on the EPA’s website at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands.

Agency Contact

Myra Price

E-mail: Price.Myra@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements apply to these grants (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Successful applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist successful applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the successful applicant may work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. See Section VII, AGENCY CONTACTS for Agency Contact information for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

B. DATA SHARING

All recipients of these assistance agreements may be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.

C. DATA ACCESS AND INFORMATION RELEASE

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are: (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with Federal funds, and (2) cited publicly and officially by a Federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations at 40 CFR. 30.36.

D. EXCHANGE NETWORK

EPA, states, territories, and tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network, a secure, Internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. States, tribes and territories exchanging data with each other or with EPA, should make the Exchange Network and the Agency's connection to it, the Central Data Exchange (CDX), the standard way they exchange data and should phase out any legacy methods they have been using. More information on the Exchange Network is available at www.exchangenetwork.net.

E. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to ensure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.